

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2859

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 1140

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR ET EG

SUBJ: ETHIOPIAN PRESS RESPONDS TO AL-AHRAM ARTICLES

1. IN ARTICLE ENTITLED AL-AHRAM-TOOL OF ENEMIES OF ETHIOPIA, FEBRUARY 24 ETHIOPIAN HERALD STRONGLY ATTACKED UNNAMED ARAB STATE FOR "POISONOUS OPINIONS" PRINTED IN FEBRUARY 2 AND 12 ISSUES OF AL-AHRAM. AFTER SHORT PRO-FORMA ATTACK ON NIMEIRI AS ENEMY OF ETHIOPIAN REVOLUTION, ARTICLE LAMBASTED AL-AHRAM FOR PRAISING NIMEIRI'S ASSISTANCE TO ERITREAN SECESSIONISTS. ARTICLE ALSO STATED THAT AGREEMENT RECENTLY CONCLUDED BETWEEN "THREE COUNTRIES " WHICH PRIMARILY AIMED AT SEPARATING ERITREA FROM ETHIOPIA, CREATING PUPPET STATE, AND THEN TAKING FULL CONTROL OF RED SEA. THREE COUNTRIES NOT DIRECTLY IDENTIFIED, BUT BOTH SUDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA MENTIONED BY NAME ELSEWHERE IN ARTICLE.

2. ARTICLE ALSO ATTACKED AL-AHRAM FOR ITS CRITICISM OF EPMG DEVELOPMENT THROUGH COOPERATION PROGRAM (ZEMETCHA) AND STANDARD OF LIVING OF ETHIOPIA PEOPLE. HERALD SUGGESTED THAT AL-AHRAM CONCENTRATE ON PROBLEMS IN ITS OWN COUNTRY, CONFIDENTIAL

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ITS HEAVY DEBTS, AND STUDY ROOT CAUSES OF RECENT RIOTS. NOTING THAT AL-AHRAM MOUTHPIECE OF ARAB LEADERS PLOTTING TO DISRUPT ETHIOPIA REVOLUTION AND UNITY, ARTICLE STATED THAT BOTH NIMEIRI AND AL-AHRAM UNAWARE OF PRINCIPLES OF OAU CHARTER FORBIDDING INTERFERENCE IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS MEMBER STATES. ARTICLE CLOSED BY NOTING AT PARTICULAR MOMENT WHEN EFFORTS BEING MADE TO STRENGTHEN AFRO-ARAB SOLIDARITY, CAMPAIGN

LAUNCHED BY AL-AHRAM APPERAS DELIBERATE ATTEMPT TO
MAKE AFRICA LOSE FAITH IN ARABS AND ULTIMATELY WRECK DESIRED
CLOSE LINKS. SOLID RELATIONS COULD NOT BE ESTABLISHED IN
NEAR FUTURE WHEN LEADERS OF OPPRESSED ARAB PEOPLES LIKE
NIMEIRI ATTEMPTING TO DESTORY UNITY OF SISTER AFRICAN
COUNTRY.

3. COMMENT: ARTICLE'S VEILED ATTACK ON EGYPT STRONGEST IN
RECENT MEMORY. PRESS HAS TO DATE GIVEN NIMEIRI PRIMARY ROLE
AS VILLAIN, BUT TODAY'S ARTICLE ELEVATED EGYPT FORM BIT PART
TO SUPPORTING ROLE. WHILE ARTICEL REFLECTS TRADITIONAL EPMG
PARANOIA OVER ARAB CONTROL OF RED SEA LITTORAL, EPMG POSSIBLY
LAYING GROUNDWORK FOR CAIRO AFRO-ARAB SUMMIT. EGYPTIAN
EMBOFFS HERE SPECULATE THAT EPMG MAY RAISE ARAB ROLE IN ERITREA
AT SUMMIT AND BELIEVE ETHIOPIANS ARE ATTEMPTING PERSUADE OTHER
BLACK AFRICAN NATIONS TO DO LIKEWISE. ONTHEIR PART, EGYPTIANS
BELIEVE IT NECESSARY TO MAINTAIN LOW PROFILE ON
ERITREAN QUESTION AT PRESENT IN ORDER HELP ASSURE AFRICAN
SUPPORT FOR BOTH GENEVA CONFERENCE AND OVERALL ARAB-ISRAELI
ISSUE. THEY EMPHASIZED PRESENT EGYPTIAN SUPPORT FOR SUDAN
IN DISPUTE WITH EPMG BASED ON DESIRE TO MAINTAIN MINEIRI
IN POWER RATHER THAN DESIRE TO CREATE INDEPENDENT ERITREA.
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